Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A sheet feeder that feeds a sheet in an image reading apparatus with an image reading part, the sheet feeder comprising:

a drive roller unit that is disposed at a downstream side from the image reading part in a sheet feed direction and includes a drive roller; and

a driven roller unit that includes a driven roller that presses against the drive roller; wherein

a coefficient of friction of an outer layer of the driven roller to a sheet to be fed is smaller than a coefficient of friction of an outer layer of the drive roller to the sheet,

an axis of the drive roller is disposed perpendicular to the sheet feed direction, and an axis of the driven roller is disposed on a slant with respect to the sheet feed direction,

the driven roller unit includes a plurality of driven roller segments that are arranged symmetrically on both sides of a center of the width of the sheet to be fed, and axes of the segments of the driven roller are arranged and inclined symmetrically on both sides of the center of the width of the sheet to be fed, and the plurality of driven rollers operating in a same direction to feed the sheet in a downstream direction, and

the drive roller and the driven roller are disposed at an immediately downstream side from a reading point of the image reading part~~,~~

~~wherein the drive roller and the driven roller disposed at the immediate downstream side from the reading point are the first rollers to nip the sheet after the sheet passes the reading point, and~~

~~wherein a nip portion between the drive roller and the driven roller contacts a leading edge of the sheet substantially at a point of the sheet when the sheet passes through the reading point and the leading edge of the sheet collides against the nip portion~~.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Previously Presented) The sheet feeder according to claim 1, wherein the axes of the segments of the driven roller are arranged such that an end portion of each axis far from the center of the width of the sheet to be fed is on an upstream side in the sheet feed direction and an end portion of each axis close to the center of the width of the sheet to be fed is on a downstream side in the sheet feed direction.

4-5. (Canceled)

6. (Previously Presented) The sheet feeder according to claim 1, wherein the plurality of the segments of the driven roller are placed out of alignment such that the segments of the driven roller on a side far from the center of the width of the sheet are arranged on an upstream side in the sheet feed direction, and the segments of the driven roller on a side close to the center of the width of the sheet are arranged on the downstream side in the sheet feed direction.

7. (Previously Presented) The sheet feeder according to claim 1, wherein the driven roller unit includes an urging member that urges the driven roller segments of the driven roller toward the drive roller, and the urging member urges the driven roller segments of the driven roller independently at least on both sides of the center of the width of the sheet to be fed.

8. (Original) The sheet feeder according to claim 1, further comprising a conveying roller pair at an upstream side from the reading part in the sheet feed direction, wherein a sheet conveying path from the conveying roller pair to a pairing of the drive roller and the driven roller is curved.

9. (Previously Presented) The sheet feeder according to claim 1, wherein the axis of the driven roller is inclined at an angle of 1° to 3° with respect to the width of the sheet to be fed.

10. (Previously Presented) The sheet feeder according to claim 1, wherein the drive roller unit has a plurality of segments of the drive roller of the same number as the segments of the driven roller.

11. (Previously Presented) A downstream sheet conveying mechanism for transporting a fed recording medium from an operation site, the downstream sheet conveying mechanism comprising:

a first drive shaft perpendicular to a feed direction of the recording medium;

a drive roller disposed on the first drive shaft;

a second drive shaft having four segments, the two innermost segments inclined relative to the first drive shaft and the two outermost segments parallel to the first drive shaft; and

at least one driven roller mounted to each segment of the second drive shaft.

12. (Original) The downstream sheet conveying mechanism according to claim 11, wherein the inclination is in a range of 1-3°.

13. (Original) The downstream sheet conveying mechanism according to claim 11, wherein the drive roller has a coefficient of friction relative to the recording medium greater than a coefficient of friction of the driven rollers relative to the recording medium.

14. (Previously Presented) The downstream sheet conveying mechanism according to claim 13, wherein the drive roller is composed of a plurality of segments equal in number to a number of driven rollers, the driven roller and the segment of the drive roller comprising a conveying pair.

15. (Previously Presented) The downstream sheet conveying mechanism according to claim 11, wherein the inclination places a centermost portion of a second drive shaft segment at a location that is one of more upstream and more downstream in the recording medium feed direction than a location of the first drive shaft, and an outermost portion of the second drive shaft segment at a location that is one of more downstream and more upstream than the location of the first drive shaft.

16-17. (Canceled)

18. (Currently Amended) A processing device, that uses a transported medium for one of reading and printing an image, having a downstream sheet conveying mechanism, comprising:

a first drive shaft perpendicular to a feed direction of the medium;

a drive roller disposed on the first drive shaft;

a second drive shaft having at least two segments, each segment inclined relative to the first drive shaft; and

at least one driven roller mounted to each segment of the second drive shaft and the driven roller mounted to each segment operating in a same direction to feed the transport medium in a downstream direction, wherein:

the inclination places a centermost portion of the second drive shaft at a location that is one of more upstream and more downstream in the medium feed direction than a location of the first drive shaft, and an outermost portion of the second drive shaft at a location that is one of more downstream and more upstream than the location of the first drive shaft,

the drive roller and the driven roller disposed at an immediate downstream side from a reading point are the first rollers to nip a sheet after the sheet passes the reading point, and

a nip portion between the drive roller and the driven roller contacts a leading edge of the sheet substantially at a point of the sheet when the sheet passes through the reading point and the leading edge of the sheet collides against the nip portion.

19. (Original) The processing device according to claim 18, wherein the inclination is in a range of 1-3° and the drive roller has a coefficient of friction relative to the medium greater than a coefficient of friction of the driven rollers relative to the medium.

20-22. (Canceled)

23. (New) The sheet feeder according to claim 1, wherein the drive roller and the driven roller disposed at the immediate downstream side from the reading point are the first rollers to nip the sheet after the sheet passes the reading point.

24. (New) The sheet feeder according to claim 23, wherein a nip portion between the drive roller and the driven roller contacts a leading edge of the sheet substantially at a point of the sheet when the sheet passes through the reading point and the leading edge of the sheet collides against the nip portion.